

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently amended) A heat-transfer label assembly, said heat-transfer label assembly consisting of:

(a) a carrier, said carrier consisting of a paper substrate overcoated with a layer of polyethylene;

(b) a wax skim coat deposited onto said polyethylene layer of said carrier, said wax skim coat having a thickness of about 0.1-0.4 lbs. per 3000 square feet; and

(c) a heat-transfer label, said heat-transfer label being deposited directly onto said wax skim coat for transfer of said heat-transfer label from said carrier to an article under conditions of heat and pressure, said heat-transfer label consisting of one or more ink design layers, each of said ink design layers being thermosetting and comprising a binder, a colorant and a cross-linking system, said binder comprising a copolyester resin and a vinyl chloride/vinyl acetate resin, said cross-linking system comprising (i) a cross-linking resin for cross-linking said binder, said cross-linking resin comprising a melamine-formaldehyde resin and (ii) a heat-activatable catalyst for catalyzing said cross-linking within about 1-2 minutes after said ink design layer has been transferred to an article that has been pre-heated, prior to label transfer, to a temperature of about 250°F-325°F, said heat-activatable catalyst comprising an amine-blocked sulfonic acid catalyst.

Claims 2-5 (Canceled).

6. (Currently amended) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 5 1 wherein said vinyl chloride/vinyl acetate resin constitutes up to about 25%, by weight, of said binder.

7. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 1 wherein said copolyester resin has a high tensile strength and low elongation.

8. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 1 wherein said colorant is a pigment, said pigment being present in an amount ranging from about 50% to about 200%, by weight, of the total of said binder and said cross-linking system.

9. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 8 wherein said pigment is titanium dioxide.

Claim 10 (Canceled).

11. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 1 wherein said cross-linking resin is present in an amount constituting about 5%-10%, by weight, of said binder.

Claim 12 (Canceled).

13. (Currently amended) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim ~~12~~ 1 wherein said cross-linking resin comprises a partially methylated melamine-formaldehyde resin.

Claims 14-15 (Canceled).

16. (Withdrawn - currently amended) A heat-transfer label assembly, said heat-transfer label assembly consisting of:

(a) a carrier, said carrier consisting of a polymeric film overcoated with a release coating made of a non-wax, non-silicone, thermoset release material; and

(b) a heat-transfer label, said heat-transfer label being deposited directly onto said release coating of said carrier for transfer of said heat-transfer label from said carrier to an article under conditions of heat and pressure, said heat-transfer label consisting of one or more ink design

layers, each of said ink design layers being thermosetting and comprising a binder, a colorant and a cross-linking system, said binder comprising a copolyester resin and a vinyl chloride/vinyl acetate resin, said cross-linking system comprising (i) a cross-linking resin for cross-linking said binder, said cross-linking resin comprising a melamine-formaldehyde resin and (ii) a heat-activatable catalyst for catalyzing said cross-linking within about 1-2 minutes after said ink design layer has been transferred to an article that has been pre-heated, prior to label transfer, to a temperature of about 250°F-325°F, said heat-activatable catalyst comprising an amine-blocked sulfonic acid catalyst;

(c) wherein said carrier is made of a non-wax material that separates cleanly from said heat-transfer label with no visually discernible portion of said carrier being transferred to the article along with said heat-transfer label.

17. (Withdrawn) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 16 wherein said release coating has a total surface energy of about 25 to 35 mN/m, of which about 0.1 to 4 mN/m is polar surface energy, and has a carbon content (by atomic %) of about 97% and an oxygen content (by atomic %) of about 3%, as measured by X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy.

18. (Withdrawn) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 17 wherein said polymeric film is made of a polymer selected from the group consisting of polyesters, polyolefins and polyamides and wherein said release coating is made by (i) applying to the polymeric film in its amorphous or semi-oriented state a composition comprising (a) a functionalized  $\alpha$ -olefin containing copolymer and (b) a crosslinking agent; and (ii) reacting said composition with the polymeric film during uniaxial or biaxial stretching and heat setting.

Claims 19-22 (Canceled).

23. (Withdrawn - currently amended) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim ~~22~~ 16 wherein said vinyl chloride/vinyl acetate resin constitutes up to about 25%, by weight, of said binder.

24. (Withdrawn - previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 16 wherein said copolyester resin has a high tensile strength and low elongation.

25. (Withdrawn) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 16 wherein said colorant is a pigment, said pigment being present in an amount ranging from about 50% to 200%, by weight, of the total of said binder and said cross-linking system.

26. (Withdrawn) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 25 wherein said pigment is titanium dioxide.

Claim 27 (Canceled).

28. (Withdrawn) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 16 wherein said cross-linking resin is present in an amount constituting about 5%-10%, by weight, of said binder.

Claim 29 (Canceled).

30. (Withdrawn - currently amended) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim ~~29~~ 16 wherein said cross-linking resin comprises a partially methylated melamine-formaldehyde resin.

Claims 31-57 (Canceled).

58. (Withdrawn - currently amended) A heat-transfer label assembly, said heat-transfer label assembly consisting of:

(a) a carrier, said carrier consisting of a paper substrate overcoated with a layer of polyethylene;

(b) a wax skim coat deposited onto said layer of polyethylene of said carrier, said wax skim coat having a thickness of about 0.1-0.4 lbs. per 3000 square feet; and

(c) at least one ink design layer deposited onto said wax skim coat for transfer of said at least one ink design layer from said carrier to an article under conditions of heat and pressure, each of said at least one ink design layer being thermosetting and consisting of a copolyester resinous binder, a vinyl chloride/vinyl acetate resinous binder, a colorant and a cross-linking system, said cross-linking system consisting of (i) a cross-linking resin for cross-linking said binder, said cross-linking resin comprising a melamine-formaldehyde resin and (ii) a heat-activatable catalyst for catalyzing said cross-linking within about 1-2 minutes after said ink design layer has been transferred to an article that has been pre-heated, prior to label transfer, to a temperature of about 250°F-325°F, said heat-activatable catalyst comprising an amine-blocked sulfonic acid catalyst.